

## ***Message from Acting Commissioner Nancy Navarretta***



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, an important observance to honor victims, celebrate survivors, and connect advocates working to end violence against women and children. On average, more than half of the women seen in mental health settings are being or have been abused by an intimate partner. Men, non-binary, and transgender individuals can also find themselves in relationships that include intimate partner violence. The ways in which a victim-survivor's mental health can be impacted can include difficulties with being productive at work, school, with caregiving, establishing and engaging in healthy relationships, and adapting to change and coping with adversity.

This year's theme, "We Are Resilient," is an apt reminder that COVID-19 has had a unique impact on victims of domestic violence and, by extension, the work we all do to address domestic violence. Physical and emotional abuse is psychologically damaging and increases women's risk of developing a mental illness. Women who have experienced domestic violence or abuse are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing a range of mental health conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicidal ideation. Not only is domestic violence and abuse a risk factor for psychological disorders, but women who have pre-existing mental health issues are more likely to experience intimate partner violence.

This month's newsletter will highlight some of the services available to women, particularly those who are pregnant or parenting. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

### ***DMHAS Women's Services***

Acknowledging the unique experiences and challenges faced by women seeking treatment for substance use disorders, DMHAS funds specialized and comprehensive programs for women and their children. These include residential treatment, outpatient treatment, and specialized care management for women transitioning from a residential setting to community-based recovery services.

While programs are located statewide in many communities to allow a woman to remain "local", she may also attend programs outside her immediate area, based on availability. The treatment programs are located in both urban and rural settings, thereby offering unique experiences, opportunities and features.

For more information, please visit [DMHAS Women's and Children's Services](#).

## PROUD in the news...

Acting Commissioner Navarretta attended the recent PROUD program relaunch at Wheeler Family Health and Wellness Center in Waterbury, where she was [interviewed by News 8](#) about the innovative program. PROUD (Parents Recovering from Opioid Use Disorder) serves pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorders, including opioid use disorder, in the Greater Hartford and New Britain areas. PROUD was developed to help pregnant and parenting women overcome traditional barriers that have in the past prevented them from entering or remaining in treatment for substance use and related issues. This family-centered treatment model means no one in the household is excluded from needed services while mom is working on her own recovery.

For more information visit [portal.ct.gov/PROUD](https://portal.ct.gov/PROUD)

**PROUD  
NOTE  
JUZGA.**

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

**dmhas**

**LIVE  
LOUD**

*\*PROUD without judgment*



*PROUD program staff at Wheeler*



**PROUD**  
**PARENTS RECOVERING FROM  
OPIOID USE DISORDERS**



## Women's REACH Program

DMHAS Women's Services REACH (Recovery, Engagement, Access, Coaching & Healing) program provides Recovery Navigators for pregnant or parenting women with substance use or co-occurring disorders. Through their personal knowledge of the recovery community, each Navigator will help connect women to services aimed at enhancing their recovery journey while supporting their goals as they develop a safe support network. Recovery Navigators help women develop collaborative relationships with community-based medical and behavioral health providers, including birthing hospitals, recovery programs, the Department of Children and Families, and the Office of Early Childhood. These navigators have a key role in the development and support of individualized plans of safe care. For more information, please visit [Women's REACH](#).



*"As a women's recovery navigator, I live my life with a sense of purpose to encourage, motivate, inspire and to give hope. I use my lived experience daily to help others reclaim their lives from substance use and co-occurring disorders."*

*Cynthia Lozada, Women's REACH Navigator*

### R.E.A.C.H.

Recovery - Multi pathways to support healthy lives

Engagement - Meeting women in their community

Access - Making connections for community based resources and facilitating warm handoffs to treatment

Coaching - Using shared experiences to encourage, support, advocate and provide a listening ear

Healing - Modeling that recovery is possible and accessible



*"Today I celebrate 6 years of sobriety. I do the work because I love giving back to women just like me. Being there for someone in their darkness and watching them transform to light is so rewarding."*

*Linda Keith, Women's REACH Navigator*



**"Being a Recovery Navigator is meaningful and fulfilling. I am passionate about showing my clients that recovery is possible."**

**Wendy Burnett, Women's REACH Navigator**

**"My work as a Recovery Navigator for the DMHAS funded Women's REACH program has been rewarding to me professionally and personally. I have been able to empower and support women through joining in their lived experiences. In my experience, the women I work with have been able to connect with increased supports and strengthen their recovery."**

**Melissa Thurmond, Women's REACH Navigator**



## ***DMHAS Women's Services supports CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) Infrastructure and Programming***

DMHAS Women's Services applied for and has been awarded supplemental COVID-19 federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Services Administration to direct to the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). The grant will increase the service capacity of the 18 lethality advocacy teams to assist in responding to the demand for identification and placement of safe housing for women and their children. CCADV is the state's leading advocacy organization for survivors of domestic violence and those organizations that serve them. The partnership between law enforcement, CCADV and their 18 member agencies continue to work together to bring best practices for police response to domestic violence in Connecticut. Trained police on the scene of a domestic violence call assess a survivor's risk for serious injury or death and can then immediately link those at greatest risk to their local domestic violence advocate for support and safety information.

This funding will also support a public awareness campaign to highlight access and availability of help through [CT Safe Connect](#) to jumpstart the ability to reach victims/survivors more quickly in the face of this pandemic. In order to address the disproportionate effects of the epidemic on underserved communities, a unique outreach/PSA campaign was developed to reach Spanish-speaking communities. CT Safe Connect is CCADV's comprehensive, coordinated statewide triage and response network that provides safety planning, counseling, and referrals to 18 domestic violence organization sites and other community-based resources through call, text, email or live chat 24/7. More than 85% of the advocates are bilingual in English and Spanish with others who speak multiple other languages to include Urdu, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Swahili and Malayalam.